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ABSTRACT

This factsheet describes the enrollment and characteristics of first-time college freshmen in California public colleges and universities in fall 1999. Slightly more recent California high school graduates enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in fall 1999 than in the previous fall, but this growth did not keep pace with the rise in the overall number of high school graduates. Graduates increased by 5.4%, while the number of first-time freshmen rose by only 0.7%. The public college-going rate of California students decreased from 50.8% in fall 1998 to 48.5% in fall 1999. No useful information was available on any unmet demand at community colleges, and the applicant numbers and admission rates for the university systems illustrate conflicting trends. In some areas, such as Orange County and the Sacramento area, the higher education participation rates of recent high school graduates actually increased, in contrast to the statewide trend. The changing patterns of college participation among students from different racial-ethnic groups contributed differentially to the statewide changes. Across all three public postsecondary educational systems, the participation rates of public high school graduates from all racial/ethnic groups except Asians decreased in fall 1999. The fastest growing group of California high school graduates, Latino students, not only had the lowest postsecondary participation rates, but these rates have been declining in recent years and continued to do so in fall 1999. (SLD)

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First-Time Freshmen in California Colleges and Universities, Fall 1999

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First-Time Freshmen in California Colleges and Universities, Fall 1999

A CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION FACTSHEET

College-going Rates of High School Graduates

While slightly more recent California high school graduates enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in fall 1999 than had the previous fall, this growth did not keep pace with the rise in the overall number of graduates. Graduates from California's public and private high schools increased by 5.4 percent while first-time freshmen from those schools went up by only 0.7 percent last year. The public college-going rate of California students decreased from 50.8 percent in fall 1998 to 48.5 percent in fall 1999.

During this period, the total number of first-time freshmen from California high schools increased, but was not distributed evenly among the public postsecondary systems. At the California Community Colleges, first-time freshmen decreased by 2.7 percent, and the college-going rate at community colleges dropped from 33.4 to 30.9 percent from fall 1998 to fall 1999. At the California State University (CSU), first-time freshmen increased by 2,866 California students in fall 1999 and the participation rate increased from 9.7 to 10.1 percent. Despite 1,071 more California first-time freshmen enrolling at the University of California (UC) than a year before, the increase in high school graduates statewide caused the UC participation rate to dip slightly from 7.6 in fall 1998 to 7.5 percent in fall 1999.

Are California public postsecondary systems failing to accommodate the "tidal wave" of new high school graduates?

No useful information is available about any unmet demand at the community colleges and the applicant numbers and admission rates for the university systems illustrate conflicting trends. Growth in the number of applicants to the CSU at 7.1 percent was surpassed by the rate of growth of first-time freshmen of 9.5 percent; at UC, the applicant pool increased by 5.9 percent, while the enrolled freshmen grew by only 4.5 percent. Declines in the admission and enrollment rates of White applicants accounted for most of this difference. However, probably the most compelling reason for the decrease in the statewide college-going rate was the decline in the number of Latino high school graduates – the fastest growing portion of the high school graduate population – who sought admission to a public university. This issue is examined more closely later in this factsheet.

Regional differences

Contrary to the statewide trend, the higher education participation rates of recent high school graduates in several regions increased. Orange County – with the largest college-going rate – had a small participation-rate increase as a result of more enrollment at community colleges. The Sacramento area increased its position to second by posting small increases in its community college and CSU participation rates in fall 1999. The Southern Central Valley also saw improvements in the number of high school graduates and in the college-going rates of those graduates. Northern California posted a small increase in the college-going rate of its graduates, particularly at

DISPLAY 1 College-Going Rates of Recent Graduates of All California High Schools, Fall 1994 to Fall 1999

Fall	California High School Graduates	First-Time Freshmen						Public College Going Rate
		California Community Colleges		California State University		University of California		
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1994	277,384	98,098	35.4	23,516	8.5	20,363	7.3	51.2
1995	280,352	103,898	37.1	25,746	9.2	21,254	7.6	53.8
1996	286,069	104,954	36.7	28,233	9.9	22,221	7.8	54.3
1997	296,281	103,936	35.1	28,912	9.8	22,709	7.7	52.5
1998	311,732	104,254	33.4	30,320	9.7	23,632	7.6	50.8
1999	328,615	101,460	30.9	33,188	10.1	24,703	7.5	48.5

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the State's public universities. Growth in the proportion of graduates in the San Bernardino/Riverside region enrolling at UCand the community colleges more than compensated for no growth in their participation rate at CSU.

Declines in the participation rates in six regions – the South Coast, San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego/Imperial, Central Coast, Los Angeles County and the Northern Central Valley — were rooted in the decreases in the community college-going rates in all of these regions. The Northern Central Valley and San Diego/Imperial regions experienced percentage point decreases in the participation of its graduates in all three public systems.

Participation of public high school graduates

Changing patterns of college participation among students from different racial-ethnic groups contributed differentially to the statewide changes (no data are available by ethnicity from private high schools).

In 1999, California public high school graduates grew by 15,531 with Latinos making up almost half (7,696) of that increase. However, in fall 1999, the community college-going rate for public high school graduates from all racial-ethnic groups declined from fall 1998. Asian, Filipino and White public high school graduates improved their participation rates at both public university systems. Black public high school graduates increased their CSU participation rate and achieved a numerical gain at UC, although their UC participation rate remained unchanged.

Despite numerical increases at both the public university systems, the participation rate of Latino public high school graduates decreased at CSU, but increased at UC. Conversely, the participation rate of Native American public high school graduates increased at CSU and decreased at UC.

Across all three public postsecondary educational systems, the participation rates of public high school graduates from all racial/ethnic groups except Asians decreased in fall 1999. The participation rate of Black public high school graduates fell to 42.7 percent.

Only 41.4 percent of Latino public high school graduates continued their education beyond high school in a California public postsecondary institution in fall 1999. As noted earlier, the fastest growing group of California high school graduates – Latino students – not only had the lowest postsecondary participation rates but these rates have been declining in recent years and continued to do so in fall 1999.

DISPLAY 2 Regional Participation of All California High School Graduates as First-Time Freshmen, Fall 1999

Region	High School Graduates	California Community Colleges		California State University		University of California		Total College Going Rate
	Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Orange County	28,335	12,131	42.8%	2,786	9.8%	2,653	9.4%	62.0%
Sacramento Area	18,308	6,982	38.1%	1,835	10.0%	1,244	6.8%	55.0%
Central Coast	6,758	2,484	36.8%	599	8.9%	514	7.6%	53.3%
Los Angeles County	86,099	26,887	31.2%	9,206	10.7%	7,020	8.2%	50.1%
San Francisco Bay	59,698	15,576	26.1%	7,321	12.3%	6,679	11.2%	49.6%
State Average	**328,447**		**30.9%**		**10.1%**		**7.5%**	**48.5%**
North Central Valley	17,253	6,247	36.2%	1,442	8.4%	564	3.3%	47.9%
San Diego/Imperial	28,014	8,153	29.1%	2,916	10.4%	2,068	7.4%	46.9%
South Coast	14,071	4,467	31.7%	1,001	7.1%	963	6.8%	45.6%
Northern California	12,578	4,018	31.9%	1,186	9.4%	456	3.6%	44.9%
Riverside/San Bern.	34,052	8,838	26.0%	2,618	7.7%	1,742	5.1%	38.8%
Southern Central Valley	23,281	5,677	24.4%	2,278	9.8%	800	3.4%	37.6%

DISPLAY 3 College-Going Rates of Recent Public High School Graduates by Racial-Ethnic Group, Fall 1998 and Fall 1999

	California Community Colleges				California State University				University of California			
	1998		1999		1998		1999		1998		1999	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Asian	10,087	30.4	9,769	28.3	4,156	12.5	4,657	13.5	6,664	20.1	7,440	21.6
Black	6,994	33.0	6,866	31.1	1,802	8.5	1,935	8.8	602	2.8	618	2.8
Filipino	3,638	38.0	3,467	36.3	1,562	16.3	1,576	16.5	877	9.2	939	9.8
Latino	28,618	32.6	30,255	31.7	6,198	7.1	6,573	6.9	2,387	2.7	2,665	2.8
Native Am.	1,018	40.5	943	35.4	206	8.2	223	8.4	137	5.5	105	3.9
White	40,688	31.7	39,283	29.3	9,376	7.3	10,218	7.6	6,647	5.2	7,638	5.7

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